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## Summer salmon fishing opportunities abound in Washington state

*From WDFW Director Jeff Koenings, Ph.D., and Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission Chair Will Roehl*

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife created this guide as an introduction to some of the many great recreational salmon-fishing opportunities available to anglers throughout western Washington this summer.

For 2003, we are anticipating strong returns of chinook, coho, pink and chum salmon, and have developed a variety of sustainable fishing opportunities on healthy hatchery and wild stocks, while continuing to strengthen our weak-stock rebuilding efforts.

Whether you plan to fish for big chinook out of Westport, LaPush or Neah Bay, troll for coho salmon in northern and central Puget Sound, or flyfish for pink salmon in a river, this guide will help you decide where and when to go, and how to fish for salmon once you get there.

One of the most exciting salmon-fishing opportunities that we've developed this year is a mark-selective fishery for hatchery chinook salmon in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. It's the first fishery of its type anywhere in Washington's marine waters: Anglers will be allowed to keep hatchery chinook, identified by a missing adipose fin, while all chinook with an intact adipose may not be brought on board the boat and must be safely released.

This fishery is important because wild Puget Sound chinook salmon stocks have protection under the federal Endangered Species Act, and the success of this new kind of fishery in the Strait of Juan de Fuca lies squarely on the shoulder of anglers. Compliance with the new rules,

including safe handling and immediate release of any chinook with an intact adipose fin, is essential.

While this year's mark-selective fishery for hatchery chinook is a first for that species in a marine area, selective fisheries have become increasingly prevalent for other species and in freshwater areas. In just a few short years, selective fisheries have taken hold on Washington's fisheries management landscape, and there are now more than 50 selective fisheries for salmon and steelhead in both marine and freshwater areas.

This coming year, the Department will be bringing new mass-marking tagging trailers on-line so that more of our hatchery-reared chinook and coho salmon can be marked, setting the stage for more selective fisheries in the years ahead.

These fisheries and other innovations have meant significant changes for Washington's anglers, and have ushered in a new era of opportunity. Recreational fishing is an important revenue source for many communities, particularly those in areas where the influx of anglers can have a significant positive economic impact. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is committed to continuing these innovations to meet our dual goals of robust, sustainable fisheries and the efficient rebuilding of weak salmon stocks.

Thanks for participating in one of Washington's greatest outdoor pursuits, and have a safe, fun summer of fishing.

# Washington waters offer wide variety of summer salmon fishing opportunities

Salmon anglers should experience some fantastic salmon-fishing opportunities throughout western Washington's marine areas this summer, as strong runs of chinook, coho, chum and even pink salmon are expected to return in 2003.

Three of the four ocean-fishing areas – Neah Bay, La Push and Westport – open June 22. La Push and Neah Bay are open seven days per week and Westport is open on a Sunday - Thursday format. Ilwaco, at the mouth of the Columbia River, will open one week later, June 29.

The outlook is for generally good fishing for chinook and coho salmon – the two main species of interest for recreational fishers in Washington state. Coastal recreational catch quotas of 225,000 coho and 59,600 chinook have been set for 2003, compared to 109,630 coho and 60,252 chinook in 2002.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has created this document to help both first-time and experienced salmon anglers alike with what should be a tremendous year of sport salmon fishing.

## Marine Area 1: Ilwaco

### June 29-Sept. 30:

Open Sundays through Thursdays only.

Chinook minimum size 26 inches, coho minimum size 16 inches. No minimum size for other salmon species.

Daily limit two salmon, no more than one chinook. Release wild coho.

Season may close early if overall quota of 112,500 hatchery coho or chinook guideline is attained.

“The prime time for coho is anytime after the Fourth of July weekend,” said Butch Smith of Coho Charters in Ilwaco. “Chinook fishing usually starts to kick in by the third week of July, and the action for both species will be hot and heavy throughout August. By September, the coho can be in the 12- to 15- pound range.”

Fishing techniques haven't changed much over the years. Successful anglers like to fish an anchovy, whole or cut-plug herring on a 4/0 or 5/0 hook attached to a four-foot leader behind a diver plug. A flasher can also be added to the rig-up if the fishing is slow. Smith suggests fishing 15 to 35 feet down in the water column.

The south side of the red buoy line out to the C-R buoy is usually one of the hottest spots where salmon congregate out of Ilwaco. Anglers typically fish in 75 to 200 feet of water. By early August, chinook fishing off Long Beach should be exceptional as well, with most anglers finding the big fish in about 60 to 100 feet of water.

Fishing in the mouth of the Columbia River requires some boat-handling skills and a good amount of common sense.

“Weather and the size of the ocean swell are always a

concern for small boaters,” Smith said. “Crossing the Columbia River bar on an out-going tide with a big ocean swell can be extremely dangerous,” he said, adding that boaters should wait until the very “bottom” of the tide – known as the low slack – before attempting to cross the bar into the ocean and return before the tide starts ebbing again.

In addition to the ocean fishery (Marine Area 1) the Buoy 10 fishery is really in a world of its own and is both a productive and sometimes difficult place to fish for salmon. It's productive because hundreds of thousands of salmon pass the buoy every year as the fish move into the Columbia River to migrate upstream to the spawning grounds. It can be difficult fishing because weather and strong tidal conditions along with shipping traffic require anglers to pay close attention to their surroundings.

“It's always a good idea to have two people or more on the boat when you're fishing Buoy 10,” said Smith. “It's safer when one person can devote all of his time to controlling the boat while the other is worrying about the fish.”

Fishing success is usually the best two hours after the incoming tide begins.



# Marine Area 2: Westport

**June 22-Sept. 14:**

Open Sundays through Thursdays only.

Chinook minimum size 26 inches, coho minimum size 16 inches. No minimum size for other salmon species.

Daily limit two salmon, no more than one chinook. Release wild coho.

Season may closer earlier if quota of 83,250 hatchery coho or chinook guideline is attained.

Grays Harbor Control zone (the entrance to Grays Harbor) closed beginning Aug. 16.

Westport, like Ilwaco, is one of the traditional salmon charterboat-fishing headquarters of Washington's Pacific coast. This year's coho and chinook allocations should provide visitors to the Westport marina with a tremendous amount of salmon-fishing success.

"There is a great balance in the chinook and coho quotas this year, which is something we haven't seen for some time," said Mark Cedargreen of the Westport Charterboat Association. "We should have more than enough fish to make it through the season, which is good news for anglers. Salmon anglers have the opportunity this year to pick their time to come fishing."

Cedargreen said answering the question of when anglers should come to Westport depends on what type of fish they want to catch. "The chinook will probably begin to tail off by the middle of August," he said. "However, the coho will be getting bigger and bigger as the season continues. I think it's safe to say that whatever time of the season, from late June through September, there's going to be very good fishing."

As with any boating in coastal waters, a tide book is an essential piece of equipment for salmon anglers this summer. Knowing the tides is even more important when boaters are trying to pass from ports into the open ocean.

"An outgoing tide with an incoming swell would be rough going for smaller fishing boats, and the U.S. Coast Guard will turn the small boats around if the water across the bar is too rough," Cedargreen said. "Fog can always be a problem during the summertime, and the best tactic to take if you're caught in the fog is to buddy up with an experienced boater and follow their lead."

Inexperienced anglers fishing from their own boat could take a cue from charterboat captains and fish the same drifts that the big boats are fishing.

"Charterboats will cut their motors and drift through a particular area, so private boats can drift through the same

areas as well, as long as they stay 75 to 100 yards upwind for safety's sake," Cedargreen said.

Westport Charterboat Association plans to post signs near the Westport boat basin noting where the chinook and coho have been biting in recent days. The association will also monitor radio queries on the same subject on VHF Channel 79 and CB Channels 8, 11, 29, 34 and 40.



## Marine Area 3: LaPush

### June 22-Sept. 14:

Open seven days a week.

Chinook minimum size 26 inches, coho minimum size 16 inches. No minimum size for other salmon species

Daily limit two salmon, plus one additional pink salmon. No more than one chinook. Release wild coho.

Season may close earlier if the sub-quota of 5,750 hatchery coho or chinook guideline is attained.

### Sept. 20-Oct. 5: (LaPush late season area)

Chinook minimum size 26 inches, coho minimum size 16 inches, no minimum size for other salmon species.

Daily limit two salmon.

No more than one chinook may be retained. Release wild coho.

Season may close earlier if the sub-quota of 5,850 hatchery coho or chinook guideline is attained.

The late season area is defined by a line from Teawhit Head northwesterly to "Q" buoy to Cake Rock, then true east to the shoreline.

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Salmon fishing in LaPush is a completely different experience from Ilwaco or Westport. This is open ocean salmon fishing in dramatic surroundings, and many anglers are able to pick up bottomfish and salmon on the same trip. There isn't a charterboat fleet that fishes out of LaPush, and small boats should be cautious of this salmon fishery because of the difficulty of the bar crossing at the mouth of the Quillayute River, said Mike Schmidt, a WDFW enforcement officer and an avid LaPush-area angler.

"This is really a unique fishing experience," Schmidt said. "There are no crowds, and there's always a realistic expectation that you will catch a variety of bottomfish right along with a chinook or coho."

Schmidt said it's sometimes necessary to go a long way out into the Pacific Ocean before you find fish off LaPush. One of the most popular spots, known as the Rockpile, is about seven miles offshore in about 160 to 170 feet of water.

"There's plenty of baitfish there to attract the salmon, and the coho and chinook can be found near the surface," Schmidt said. "It's a tremendous fishery, but it takes some time and effort to get there."



Hatchery coho (top) can easily be identified by their lack of an adipose fin.

Anglers familiar with fishing out of LaPush know that mid-July through mid-August is the prime time for chinook, while the month of August is considered the best time to catch coho.

"The coho seem to be larger here than elsewhere along the coast," Schmidt said, adding that the marked fish tend to run earlier in the season, followed by the big unmarked native coho. Those seeking coho can usually find them by heading straight out of LaPush seven to 11 miles. Remember that unmarked coho must be carefully released.

Herring is the bait of choice for both coho and chinook. Schmidt said the shop at the LaPush marina can sometimes run out of bait, so anglers should be prepared to bring their own.

# Marine Area 4: Neah Bay

## June 22-Sept. 14:

Open seven days a week.

Chinook minimum size 26 inches, coho minimum size 16 inches. No minimum size for other salmon species.

Daily limit two salmon, plus one additional pink. No more than one chinook. Release wild coho. Release chum Aug. 1-Sept. 14.

East of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line, chinook retention allowed July 1-July 31 only, and east of a true north-south line through Sail Rock closed to salmon fishing July 1-July 31.

Waters south of a line from Kydaka Point westerly approximately four miles to Shipwreck Point are closed to fishing for salmon July 1-Sept. 30.

Season may close earlier if quota of 23,400 hatchery coho or chinook guideline is attained.

Gordy Bentler of the Cape Motel and Charter in Neah Bay said mid-July is prime-time for big chinook salmon to be on the move through the Neah Bay area, which is just at the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

“This is the first time in a decade that the water between Waadah Island and Tatoosh Island is open for chinook fishing in July,” Bentler said. “That’s great news, especially for smaller boats, because it’s protected water and can easily be fished by boats that normally would have a tough time fishing in open water.”

The north side of Waadah Island, just northeast of Neah Bay, is a great place to pick up chinook. Bentler said chinook can usually be found in 60 to 120 feet of water, particularly at daylight and dusk.

Other spots that should be productive for chinook include the Table Top, just west of Mukkaw Bay, which is on the Pacific Ocean side of Cape Flattery, and along Umatilla Reef, which is farther south.

“From mid-July through August, the chinook fishing in all of those areas can be really outstanding,” Bentler said. “And Neah Bay also has world-class coho fishing beginning in late August through much of September.”

One method of fishing for coho that has grown in popularity in recent years is trolling a large coho fly. “Just let



the fly trail behind the boat about 50 feet, right on the surface, and you’ll be surprised how phenomenal the fishing can be,” Bentler said. “Coho fishing should get hotter as the season goes along, and by Labor Day the fishing should be incredible.”

Like Marine Area 3, salmon fishing in Marine Area 4 is open seven days a week.

Bentler noted that there is a daily limit of 10 rockfish that can be taken along with chinook, coho and pink salmon. No more than one canary rockfish may be retained, and yelloweye rockfish must be released.

## Marine Area 5 – Sekiu (Barbless hooks required)

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**July 1-July 4:** No minimum size.

Daily limit two salmon.

Release chinook, wild coho and chum.

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### July 5-July 31: Chinook Selective Fishery.

Chinook minimum size 22 inches, no minimum size for other salmon species.

Daily limit two salmon. Release wild chinook, wild coho and chum.

Any salmon to be released may not be brought on board a vessel.

Hatchery chinook retention may close earlier if an overall quota of 3,500 chinook is attained.

Waters south of a line from Kydaka Point westerly approximately four miles to Shipwreck Point are closed to fishing for salmon July 1-Sept. 30.

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### Aug. 1-Aug. 14: Chinook Selective Fishery.

Chinook minimum size 22 inches. No minimum size for other salmon species.

Daily limit four salmon.

No more than two chinook and coho in total.

Release wild chinook, wild coho and chum.

Any salmon to be released may not be brought on board a vessel.

Hatchery chinook retention may close earlier if an overall quota of 3,500 chinook is attained.

Waters south of a line from Kydaka Point westerly approximately four miles to Shipwreck Point are closed to fishing for salmon July 1-Sept. 30.

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### Aug. 15-Aug. 31: No minimum size.

Daily limit four salmon.

No more than two coho. Release chinook, wild coho and chum.

Waters south of a line from Kydaka Point westerly approximately four miles to Shipwreck Point are closed to fishing for salmon July 1-Sept. 30.

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### Sept. 1-Sept. 30: No minimum size.

Daily limit two salmon.

Release chinook, wild coho and chum.

Waters south of a line from Kydaka Point westerly approximately four miles to Shipwreck Point are closed to fishing for salmon July 1-Sept. 30.

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Sekiu is one of the premier small-boat salmon fishing areas in the state. The Strait of Juan de Fuca doesn't typically have rough seas like the Pacific Ocean does, and salmon can be caught close to shore along the kelp beds, as well as several miles out into the Strait, said Chris Mohr of Van Riper's Resort in Sekiu.

"Sixteen- to 20-foot boats can easily fish the most productive fishing areas from Sekiu," Mohr said.

Sekiu will, for the first time, host a mark-selective fishery for hatchery chinook salmon, from July 5 through Aug. 14, or until a quota of 3,500 marked chinook has been taken. Only hatchery chinook, identified by the lack of an adipose fin, may be retained. Salmon that can't be retained, including chinook with an intact adipose fin, wild coho and chum salmon, may not be brought on board a vessel. This new rule is in place to reduce the hooking mortality of non-targeted salmon.

"Popular areas for chinook include the Cave, Eagle Point, Slip Point, Mussolini Rock and the Coal Mine," Mohr said, adding that local businesses that cater to out-of-area anglers can quickly give locations of these hotspots to anglers who aren't familiar with the territory. "Chinook can be found from the kelp beds to about 180 feet of water along the shoreline, or east and west from Sekiu about one to five miles out in the Strait."

Big coho can also be found in waters off Sekiu, usually in the top 40 feet of the water column. In addition to the traditional fishing gear, such as plug cut herring, hoochies or spoons behind a flasher, surface trolling a large coho fly or streamer can often entice a hooknose coho into striking. Mohr said coho fishing usually gets hot in mid-August and stays that way for a month or longer.



## Marine Area 6 – Eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca (Barbless hooks required)

### Salmon - Entire Area.

**July 1-July 4:** No minimum size.

Daily limit two salmon.

Release chinook, wild coho and chum.

**Aug. 15-Aug. 31:**

No minimum size.

Daily limit four salmon.

No more than two coho.

Release chinook, wild coho and chum.

**Sept. 1-Sept. 30:**

No minimum size.

Daily limit two salmon.

Release chinook, wild coho and chum.

### Chinook Selective Fishery, WEST of a north/south line through the No. 2 Buoy immediately east of Ediz Hook.

**July 5-July 31:** Chinook minimum size 22 inches.

Other salmon species, no minimum size.

Daily limit two salmon.

Release wild chinook, wild coho and chum.

Any salmon to be released may not be brought on board a vessel.

Hatchery chinook retention may close earlier if an overall quota of 3,500 chinook is attained.

**Aug. 1-14:** Chinook minimum size 22 inches.

Other salmon species, no minimum size.

Daily limit four salmon.

No more than two coho and chinook in total may be retained.

Release wild chinook, wild coho and chum.

Any salmon to be released may not be brought on board a vessel.

Hatchery chinook retention may close earlier if an overall quota of 3,500 chinook is attained.

### Chinook Release Area, EAST of a north/south line through the No. 2 Buoy immediately east of Ediz Hook.

**July 5-July 31:** No minimum size.

Daily limit two salmon.

Release all chinook, wild coho and chum.

Any salmon to be released may not be brought on board a vessel.

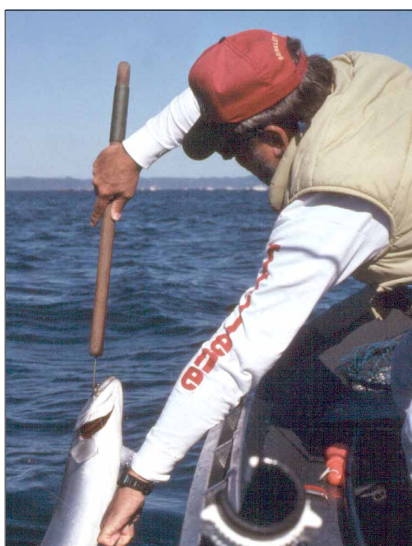
**Aug. 1-14:** No minimum size.

Daily limit four salmon.

No more than two coho may be retained.

Release all chinook, wild coho and chum.

Any salmon to be released may not be brought on board a vessel.



Proper use of a de-hooker is essential in mark-selective fisheries.

Marine Area 6 has essentially been cut in half, with the western portion open to the same mark-selective hatchery chinook salmon fishery as Marine Area 5 has. Waters west of the eastern tip of Ediz Hook are open to mark-selective hatchery chinook fishing from July 5-Aug. 14, or until 3,500 fin-clipped chinook are landed, whichever comes first. Freshwater Bay is closed to fishing July 1-Aug. 31 to protect chinook bound for the Elwha River.

Chinook can typically be caught along the outside of Ediz Hook, near the bottom, or at The Humps, which is also a popular spot for halibut and rockfish fishers to try their luck. First Hump, Second Hump and Third

Hump are a few miles west and north of Ediz Hook. Mooch a plug-cut herring rig near the bottom, in about 60 to 180 feet of water with three to eight ounces of lead, depending on the current and wind conditions.

Coho fishing in Marine Area 6 can often be excellent, particularly after Labor Day. Anglers can pick up coho five to seven miles north of Ediz Hook in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Be sure to watch for marine traffic. Spoons, plug-cut herring, or any variety of hoochies trolled behind a flasher can entice big coho to bite off Port Angeles in late September.

# Marine Area 7 – San Juan Islands

(Barbless hooks required)

## July 1-July 31:

Chinook minimum size 22 inches.

Other salmon species – no minimum size.

Daily limit two salmon, no more than one chinook.

## Aug. 1-Sept. 30:

Chinook minimum size 22 inches.

Other salmon species – no minimum size.

Daily limit four salmon.

No more than one chinook may be retained.

No more than two chinook and coho in total may be retained. Release wild coho and chum.

The San Juan Islands are a popular destination for fans of salmon, bottomfish and shellfish, and the month of July into early August should provide for some excellent chinook fishing, particularly on the western side of San Juan Island. There are a number of great traditional chinook fishing

spots, including Hein Bank, which is south of San Juan Island, or within the islands themselves, including Eagle Bluff, Tide Point, Point Lawrence and waters along the north shoreline of Orcas Island.

For coho, waters west and north of San Juan Island can produce fantastic fishing beginning in mid- to late August and peaking in mid-September.

Larry Carpenter, owner of Master Marine Services, Inc., a fishing-boat dealership in Mt. Vernon, said anglers in Marine Area 7 will also benefit from this year's anticipated bumper crop of pink salmon returning to northern Puget Sound streams.

"Rosario Strait, Haro Strait, and the west side of San Juan Island should be thick with humpies from mid-August through mid-September," Carpenter said. "The key is to fish slow and shallow for pinks – only 25 to 40 feet down in the water column."

As for what to use, Carpenter's advice is simple and to the point.

"Pink salmon are dead on arrival for anything pink," he said. That means pink hoochies, pink jigs, or pretty much any other lure that's pink. Small herring, spoons and other smaller lures also work.

The care and handling of a pink salmon after it's been brought into the boat is essential, Carpenter said.

"The fish need to be bled and put in a cooler right away," he said. "Cut the gills and put the fish in a bucket of seawater as soon as you bring it on board. Allow the fish to bleed out completely, then get the fish into an ice chest right away. Don't let the fish sit out on the deck."





# Central and Southern Puget Sound, plus Hood Canal

## (Barbless hooks required)

There are still more salmon-fishing opportunities in Puget Sound and Hood Canal, as well as the rivers that drain into these waters.

Marine areas 8-1 and 8-2, which include marine waters “inside” Whidbey Island from LaConner south to Everett, offer great fishing opportunities in August and September for coho and pink salmon. The pink salmon fishing should be excellent in Marine Area 8-2, especially in waters south of Everett to the southern end of Whidbey Island, which is where the fabled “Humpy Hollow” fishing area can be found.

The popular Tulalip Bay “bubble” fishery opens July 4 on a 12:01 a.m. Friday through 11:59 a.m. Monday schedule through the end of September. There is a daily limit of two fish per day, and the chinook fishing can often be quite good.

Marine Area 9, which includes Admiralty Inlet near Port Townsend down to the Apple Cove Point-Edwards Point line opens July 16 for coho salmon, and all chinook must be released. This area can be good for coho salmon in August and September as these fish are migrating into Puget Sound.

Seattle and central Puget Sound (north of a line from Meadow Point to Point Monroe) offers a catch-and-release

fishery for chinook salmon beginning June 16. Many Seattle anglers who stay closer to home during the summer participate in the Elliott Bay chinook fishery, which opens July 11 through August 17 on a Friday through Sunday schedule. The central Puget Sound area can be good for coho salmon in late September and early October.

The Tacoma area is usually good in June and July for chinook salmon. These fish are primarily bound for south Puget Sound hatcheries and offer good opportunities throughout the summer.

Finally, Hood Canal also offers some great fishing opportunities throughout the summer. Chinook fishing begins July 1 south of Ayock Point with no more than two chinook in the daily four fish limit. North of Ayock Point, coho fishing begins Sept. 1 with a four-fish daily limit.

Also, Quilcene Bay has been very good in recent years for hatchery-produced coho salmon in late August and September. Remember that the WDFW and its co-managers, the western Washington treaty Indian tribes, are working to restore Endangered Species Act-protected summer chum salmon in Hood Canal, so be sure to safely release any chum prior to October 16.

## Plentiful pink salmon can keep fishing action hot

Salmon anglers this year will not only see strong numbers of chinook and coho salmon returning to many areas of western Washington, but a bonanza of pink salmon is expected to return to northern Puget Sound as well.

The smallest of the six Pacific salmon species, pink salmon are unique in that they always return to Puget Sound streams as 2-year-old fish, and generally only during odd-numbered years. They have not been popular targets for sportfishers, perhaps due to their small size and relatively bland flavor.

Some anglers who may have looked down at the lowly pink salmon likely had a change of heart in 2001, the last “pink year,” when more than 3 ½ million pink salmon flooded through the Strait of Juan de Fuca to northern Puget Sound streams, particularly the Snohomish and Skagit river systems.

Not only did the feisty little salmon provide thousands of anglers with countless hours of fishing action, but some of the individual fish were downright huge. In fact, state and even world records for the largest sport-caught pink salmon were set and broken several times during the course of the season. The final big pink of the summer – a new

all-tackle world record – was taken in the Skykomish River. The fish tipped the scales at just a shade under 15 pounds.

While it is impossible to predict if there will be any supersized pink salmon in the offing for 2003, anglers will no doubt catch their share of “humpies” in both saltwater and freshwater fisheries.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has established a “pink bonus” bag limit that will be in effect for marine areas 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8-1, 8-2 and 9 so anglers can take advantage of the bonanza of pink salmon expected back in 2003.

In the ocean, anglers targeting pink salmon can have success with a variety of lures, including pink hoochies, and other lures, while small “firecracker” herring fished behind a flasher can also be effective.

Beach fishers in places such as Point No Point, Point Wilson, Point Partridge, Bush Point and Lagoon Point can cast a pink jig, spoons or other popular hardware at schooling humpies. Firecracker herring can also be fished

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## Pink salmon, continued from previous page

whole beneath a bobber. Saltwater flyfishers have success hooking pink salmon using bright patterns, such as hot pink sparkle shrimp, a pink popsicle and a bunny fly.

"Typically, biting pinks will be found shallower in the morning, and will go gradually deeper in the water column as the day goes along," said WDFW fisheries biologist Curt Kraemer. "And the key for trolling for pinks is to go slow, slow, slow."

Anglers fond of fishing for pink salmon in some of the traditional hot spots, such as the Humpy Hollow, the Shipwreck, or Possession Bar, should start seeing good numbers of fish soon after the first week of August. For those who can't wait that long, pink salmon will likely be arriving about one week earlier in the western portion of Marine Area 9 near Port Townsend.

"Pinks headed for the Snohomish and Stillaguamish river systems tend to hang out in the marine terminal areas longer, while the Skagit River pinks tend to shoot up the river right away," Kraemer said.

In the freshwater, anglers can get the diminutive salmon to take several spoons. Jigs also work well in the rivers. Sand shrimp and small pink spin glos can work, as do flies that are in the size 4 to 6 range.

"Pinks will deteriorate pretty quickly once they hit the

freshwater, so fishing the lower reaches of rivers is key," Kraemer said. "It's important to target fish that are still moving up the river – those individual fish that have settled down over a stretch of gravel will deteriorate even more rapidly than those that are still moving upstream."

Kraemer said it's important that hooked fish that aren't going to be kept should be released immediately with as little handling as possible. Fish that are destined for the dinner table also need immediate attention. Bleed the fish right away by cutting the gills and place them in a wetted burlap sack and into a cooler. In marine areas, where the fish are still feeding, it's important to clean the fish immediately to maintain the quality of the salmon's flavor, then get it into the cooler.

"They're an excellent smoked fish, and they're good for the grill, too," Kraemer said. "They're better fresh than frozen. In fact, if the fish isn't going to be eaten fresh, I'd put it in the smoker, vacuum seal it, then freeze it."

Their relatively low fat content makes pink salmon less "fishy" tasting than other salmon – some would say less flavorful. This makes a pink a perfect candidate for a 30-minute soak in a marinade, followed by a hot barbecue grill.

## No boat? No problem! Beach fishing can mean angling success

Anglers interested in going after salmon don't need a fishing boat, and don't even need to travel to a popular Pacific Ocean charterboat port for a successful fishing trip. There is an abundance of good salmon-fishing opportunities from the beaches and shorelines of Puget Sound.

Beach fishing is a great way to introduce young or inexperienced anglers to salmon fishing, and it's perfect for family fishing. Many of the best fishing beaches have plenty of room for kids to play if they aren't interested in fishing. State parks that offer great beach fishing also might have camping sites, picnic areas and other amenities.

The first step in a successful fishing trip, whether it's to a Puget Sound beach or a Pacific Coast port, is to consult the regulation pamphlet for fishing closure areas, bag limits and other essential information. The 2003/2004 "Fishing in Washington" pamphlet is available at retail outlets throughout the state, and at <http://www.wa.gov/wdfw/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> on the Internet.

Changes must sometimes be made to fishing rules, and it's important for anglers to check the emergency rule change hotline, (360) 902-2500, before heading out. Rule change

information can also be found on-line, at the same web address as above.

Once you've determined fishing dates for a specific beach, try to figure out when the best time to go fishing would be by consulting a tide chart.

"Often a particular beach fishes best on a certain stage of the tide," said WDFW fisheries biologist Curt Kraemer. "It's a little site specific, but most beaches fish best on the high end of the slack tide. Start from that point and make adjustments to where and how you're fishing based on what the successful anglers are doing."

Popular fishing gear used by beach anglers include a number of spoons and jigs. A small "firecracker" herring fished with a bobber can also be effective. Pink salmon, which return only in odd-numbered years and are expected to have a strong run this year, can be taken with a 2- or 2 1/2-inch hot pink jig.

Virtually all fishing lures come with barbed hooks, which are illegal in Marine Areas 5 through 13, so bring a pair of needlenose pliers and completely pinch down the barbs before you go fishing.

There are also growing numbers of flyfishers who flip herring and candlefish imitations, or bright streamers when coho salmon are present. Pink and chum salmon can also be taken on flies tied in simple patterns with pink, silver, pale green or pale blue colors.

Salmon anglers who find themselves on the Pacific coast but who can't or don't want to go out on a boat aren't out of luck. There can be great salmon fishing from some of the area's jetties. The Columbia River North Jetty, which is near Ilwaco at the mouth of the Columbia River, is open to salmon fishing seven days a week when the Buoy 10 or Marine Area 1 salmon fishery is open. Barbed hooks are allowed when fishing from the jetty, and the daily limit and minimum size restrictions follow the most liberal regulations of either area.

Westport and Ocean Shores areas, in Marine Area 2-2, also have fishing opportunities for those without a boat. The Westport Boat Basin and Ocean Shores Boat Basin are open Aug. 16-Jan. 31 with a daily limit of six salmon, no more than four adults may be retained. Barbed hooks are allowed.

Most of the best beach-fishing locations are in northern Puget Sound, including Admiralty Inlet, which connects the sound to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. This area is like a superhighway for migrating salmon. Millions of adult fish returning to spawn in their stream of birth in Puget Sound or Hood Canal must first go through Admiralty Inlet, making the waters around Port Townsend an excellent place to hit the beach for a chance to catch a salmon.

The Victorian seaport town of Port Townsend has several excellent beach access areas for salmon fishing, including Fort Worden, which is a popular and productive spot for flyfishers and gear-tossing anglers to hook into coho and pink salmon.

Heading deeper into Admiralty Inlet toward Puget Sound proper is Fort Flagler State Park, on Marrowstone Island. The island is separated from the mainland by a narrow channel that's spanned by a bridge. While the main beach fishing area is along the northeastern portion of the island, some anglers fishing the channel have great success coaxing coho to take a small whole herring floated underneath a bobber.

Point No Point is one of the most popular beach-fishing sites in the state. Located at the northern end of the Kitsap Peninsula about 10 miles north of the community of Kingston, Point No Point County Park offers beach anglers a great opportunity to land a salmon. Chinook, coho, chum and pink salmon, as well as steelhead and cutthroat trout,

have all been taken at Point No Point from beach-bound fishers.

Salmon fishing in Marine Area 9, which runs from Port Townsend to Apple Cove Point near the Edmonds-Kingston ferry route, begins July 16 with a daily limit of two salmon. All chinook must be released. The daily limit goes up to four fish for the month of August, no more than two of which can be coho. Chinook and chum must be released. The increased bag limit in August allows anglers to take advantage of an expected bonanza of pink salmon returning to northern Puget Sound streams.

Whidbey Island forms the opposite shoreline for much of Marine Area 9, stretching from the Port Townsend area south past Point No Point. Several public beaches on the island's western shore offer great beach fishing opportunities, including Fort Ebey State Park, Fort Casey State Park, Lagoon Point and Bush Point.

Deception Pass, at the northern end of Whidbey Island, is another excellent beach fishing location, while Possession Beach, at the southern end of Whidbey, is a great coho beach that this summer might be one of the best beaches around for pink salmon headed back to the Snohomish River system.

There are many great fishing piers throughout Puget Sound where big salmon are caught every year.

The Edmonds Public Fishing Pier, in Marine Area 9, is open year 'round with a daily limit of two salmon, no more than one of which can be a chinook, and a 22-inch minimum size on chinook. Chum salmon must be released through the months of August and September.

The waters of central Puget Sound, including Seattle and Bremerton, have a tremendous amount of fishing pier choices. Elliott Bay Fishing Pier at Terminal 86, Seacrest Pier, Waterman Pier, Bremerton Boardwalk and Illahee State Park, near Bremerton, all offer land-bound anglers great opportunities to take a salmon. All of these piers are open year 'round with a daily limit of two salmon, no more than one chinook, and a minimum size of 22 inches on chinook. Chum salmon must be released Aug. 1 to Sept. 15.

There are several pier fishing opportunities in southern Puget Sound, including the Les Davis Fishing Pier near Tacoma, and fishing piers at Des Moines, Redondo and Dash Point. Even deeper into southern Puget Sound is the Fox Island public fishing pier. These fisheries are open year 'round with a two-salmon daily limit no more than which can be a chinook (22-inch minimum). Wild coho must be released July 1 through Oct. 31 at the Fox Island pier.





## 'Go Play Outside' initiative provides opportunity for youth education

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is actively involved in efforts to ensure that even the youngest anglers have the opportunity to learn about fishing and fisheries management.

The Department has created a new initiative, "Go Play Outside," with the objective of increasing interest, support, and participation in outdoor recreation. This helps WDFW reconnect with traditional users and build bridges to new ones.

Included in the initiative are public workshops on fishing, hunting, shooting sports, and wildlife watching sponsored by WDFW or presented through partnerships. This initiative creates new partnerships and expands existing ones; recruits new outdoor recreationists; encourages mentoring efforts; and provides information, outreach, and education to the public.

WDFW has a partnership agreement with the Washington Wildlife Federation (WWF), the state affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation, which is the nation's largest conservation group. WWF's mission is to preserve, enhance, and perpetuate Washington's fish and wildlife and fish and wildlife habitat through education and conservation programs supported by a diverse membership.



WWF will send a coalition of volunteers to schools, fairs and special events across the state to offer youngsters hands-on training in outdoor pursuits.

Anglers throughout the state can help us with this important education effort. License buyers will have the opportunity to make a voluntary donation to support youth outdoor recreation activities.

WDFW hopes to raise upwards of \$50,000 a year through these voluntary donations. The vast majority of the contributions collected through this program will go directly to the non-profit partners to conduct youth activities promoting fishing, hunting and other outdoor recreational pursuits.

More information on the Go Play Outside initiative is available on the WDFW website, at <http://www.wa.gov/wdfw/gpo/> on the Internet.